



## Leaders have role to play in Soldiers' safety

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BY Lt. Col. Laura Loftus, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center

FORT RUCKER, Ala. - As the holidays approach, many Soldiers will be driving or motorcycling to visit family and friends. Unfortunately, some Soldiers won't return, and others will return injured.

Leaders have a vested interest and role in ensuring Soldiers return safely from their travels, and Soldiers have an obligation to their buddies and units to return to carry their share of the load.

Leaders are responsible for their Soldiers' well-being on and off duty, and are accountable to the Army to maintain trained and combat-ready organizations. These responsibilities can't be met when Soldiers are killed or injured in privately owned vehicle accidents. The fundamental truth is when leaders get involved with their Soldiers' decisions and plans, there are fewer accidents.

In our November-December issue of ImpaX, there are three stories about close calls during winter holiday travels. All three situations might have been avoided had the Soldiers and leaders done a pre-trip risk assessment. And while Soldiers must accept responsibility for trip planning, leaders must support and mentor their efforts.

The Army Safety Management Information System-2 - located at <https://crc.army.mil/home> - was created to help prevent POV accidents. This Web-based, automated risk-management tool encourages leaders and their Soldiers to work together to plan safe road trips.

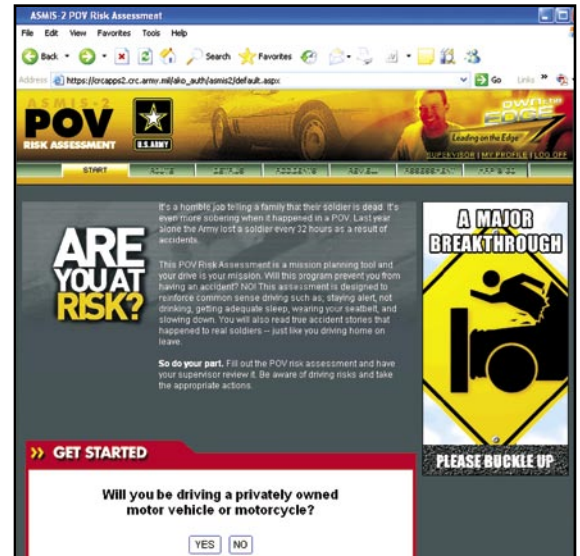
Once registered and logged in, users are asked to respond to a series of questions regarding the type of vehicle they'll be driving, their driving background and experience, and the nature of their trip. ASMIS-2 then assigns an initial risk level to the trip and provides users with examples of accidents that occurred on similar trips. Users can then select controls to address the hazards identified in their initial assessment. ASMIS-2 then re-evaluates the hazards and assigns a new risk value for the trip.

Once a user submits the assessment, a copy is sent to their designated supervisor for review. Users are also offered an opportunity to check construction zones along their route of travel and to finish a partially completed DA31 leave form.

Leader involvement is the key to ASMIS-2. For example, a Soldier planning a 1,600-mile roundtrip over a four-day weekend is probably not thinking things through. An involved leader can help the Soldier come up with effective controls or alternate plans. When the details of a plan are shared with someone else, hidden flaws often become apparent. This one-on-one interaction is critical for ASMIS-2 to be effective.

According to Combat Readiness Center statistics, Soldiers and leaders who used ASMIS-2 in fiscal 2005 were significantly less likely to be involved in a fatal accident than non-users.

(Lt. Col. Laura Loftus works at the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center. This article first appeared in the November-December issue of ImpaX magazine, available online at <https://crc.army.mil/home/>. It was coauthored by Larry Kulsrud, program manager for ASMIS-2, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center.)



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